

MAR - 5 2003

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

# Richmond Free Press

## Editorial Page

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February 27-March 1, 2003

# Stop monopoly in the media

Weather permitting in Richmond, the Federal Communications Commission this week will hold its only official public hearing on whether, among other things, monopolistic newspapers like the Richmond Times-Dispatch should be allowed to also own a television in the same city.

This is an alarmingly dangerous notion. It should never have seen the light of day in a democratic society.

And it certainly should never have reached the level of discussion for the FCC.

Relaxing the long-standing rule that restricts newspaper-television ownership would further abuse and dilute the First Amendment. This amendment thankfully requires the widest dissemination of information and news from diverse sources in order to allow the people to hold government accountable and to make informed decisions.

Approval of single newspaper-television ownership represents ultimate disrespect for the First Amendment. It would limit the voices of the people and renege on the nation's constitutional commitment to wide-open, uninhibited, robust debate.

Monopoly is an enemy of the people. It drastically melts competition, leaving the many at the mercy of a few.

In considering the dangerous media-merger issue, we respectfully suggest that members of the FCC consider the history of the owners of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, the only daily newspaper in Richmond.

That history shows the horrendous, irresponsible product of monopolistic journalism. That ugly history is soaked with malicious, anti-democratic, anti-First Amendment positions driven by an antiquated racist ideology.

It shows owners who place greed over the public trust and the basic principles of journalism.

It shows owners who **maliciously promote** racial divisiveness rather than tolerance and understanding to the detriment of this city, Virginia and the nation.

This is not an exercise in hyperbole.

All one has to do is check the facts. The facts will clearly show why the Times-Dispatch is often referred to as the Times-Disgrace. Those facts will indisputably show how the Times-Dispatch earned its ugly, irresponsible reputation for miserably failing to perform as a responsible corporate citizen.

The Times-Dispatch owners have almost always opposed the best for America while promoting the worst.

The less egregious examples of their irrationally un-American views range from glorifying the Confederacy to championing Massive Resistance in defiance of the law of the land to defaming Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the great Justice Thurgood Marshall.

Giving newspapers like the Richmond Times-Dispatch the opportunity to extend their menacing tentacles of monopoly would further internally threaten the survival of democracy.

It **would** also reward the owners of the Richmond Times-Dispatch for their wholesale misdeeds against society and encourage them to continue their deplorable behavior.

This would be awfully regrettable.

It would also deal another powerful blow to the First Amendment, which has already been beaten to a frightening state of dilution.

We hope these observations will help the members of the **FCC** understand the counter-productiveness of expanding monopoly journalism.

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